

The New York Times says I'm doing it all wrong, but maybe that's for the better

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Some time ago, *The New York Times* ran a story titled *In Web World of 24/7 Stress, Writers Blog Till They Drop*, which mentions that “those on the lower rungs of the business can earn as little as \$10 a post.” Dude, if that’s what people on the lower rungs earn, then I’m below ground level! (Nevermind that just the previous month, an article in *The New York Times* wrote about the business of blogging: Don’t expect to get rich.) Then again, I probably shouldn’t complain, seeing as what most people took away from the article was that blogging kills.

Slate’s Timothy Noah noted in his article *Death by Blogging* that the *New York Times* article employs a magic phrase which, once it appears, is a signal to the reader that the subject matter of the story is completely made up:

Give Richtel credit for admitting high up in the story that what follows is purest fancy. Newspaper reporters call these caveat-rich passages “to-be-sure grafts.”

The “to-be-sure” paragraph appears as paragraph number six:

To be sure, there is no official diagnosis of death by blogging, and the premature demise of two people obviously does not qualify as an epidemic. There is also no certainty that the stress of the work contributed to their deaths. But...

It opens with the magic phrase that says “What you are reading in the remainder of this article is complete fantasy,” then adds a few more statements saying that “None of what this article says is true.” And then, as if to say, “Let’s not let facts get in the way of a good story,” it immediately resumes the fabrication with a “But...”

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